IN THE CLAIMS

For the convenience of the Examiner, all pending claims of the Application are reproduced below.

21.   (Currently Amended)   A method for synchronizing packet handling instructions, comprising:

receiving a fixed filter specifying a packet flow;

receiving a packet having a flow identifier;

determining whether the flow identifier corresponds to the fixed filter;

handling the packet according to the fixed filter in response to the flow identifier corresponding to the fixed filter; and

discarding the fixed filter after a predetermined period of time.

22.   (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 21, further comprising:

forwarding the packet in response to the flow identifier not corresponding to the fixed filter.

23.   (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 22, further comprising:

receiving an action filter for the packet with the flow identifier not corresponding to the fixed filter, the action filter indicating how the packet is to be processed.

24.   (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 23, further comprising:

handling the packet according to the action filter.

25.   (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 24, further comprising:
discarding the action filter after a predetermined period of time.

26.   (Canceled)

27.   (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 21, wherein the flow identifier
includes at least one of a source address, a destination address, a source port, a destination
port, and a protocol.

28.   (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 21, wherein the fixed filter is
associated with one transport direction of the packet flow.

29.   (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 21, further comprising:
receiving a wildcard filter specifying another packet flow;
determining whether the flow identifier corresponds to the fixed filter or the wildcard
filter
handling the packet according to one of the fixed filter and the wildcard filter, the
fixed filter having a priority over the wildcard filter.

30.   (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 21, wherein the packet flow
specified by the fixed filter has been load balanced through a network.

31.　(Currently Amended)　A system for synchronizing packet handling instructions, comprising:

means for receiving a fixed filter specifying a packet flow;

means for receiving a packet having a flow identifier;

means for determining whether the flow identifier corresponds to the fixed filter;

means for handling the packet according to the fixed filter in response to the flow identifier corresponding to the fixed filter; and

means for discarding the fixed filter after a predetermined period of time.

32.　(Previously Presented)　The system of Claim 31, further comprising:

means for forwarding the packet in response to the flow identifier not corresponding to the fixed filter.

33.　(Previously Presented)　The system of Claim 32, further comprising:

means for receiving an action filter for the packet with the flow identifier not corresponding to the fixed filter.

34.　(Previously Presented)　The system of Claim 33, further comprising:

means for handling the packet according to the action filter.

35.　(Previously Presented)　The system of Claim 31, wherein the flow identifier includes at least one of a source address, a destination address, a source port, a destination port, and a protocol.

36.   (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium including code for synchronizing packet handling instructions, the code operable to:

receive a fixed filter specifying a packet flow;

receive a packet having a flow identifier;

determine whether the flow identifier corresponds to the fixed filter;

handle the packet according to the fixed filter in response to the flow identifier corresponding to the fixed filter; and

discard the fixed filter after a predetermined period of time.

37.   (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of Claim 36, wherein the code is further operable to:

forward the packet in response to the flow identifier not corresponding to the fixed filter.

38.   (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of Claim 37, wherein the code is further operable to:

receive an action filter for the packet with the flow identifier not corresponding to the fixed filter.

39.   (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of Claim 38, wherein the code is further operable to:

handle the packet according to the action filter.

40.   (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of Claim 36, wherein the flow identifier includes at least one of a source address, a destination address, a source port, a destination port, and a protocol.

41.   (Currently Amended)   A device for synchronizing packet handling instructions, comprising:

a forwarding agent operable to receive a fixed filter specifying a packet flow, the forwarding agent operable to receive a packet having a flow identifier, the forwarding agent operable to determine whether the flow identifier corresponds to the fixed filter, the forwarding agent operable to handle the packet according to the fixed filter in response to the flow identifier corresponding to the fixed filter, wherein the fixed filter is discarded after a predetermined period of time.

42.   (Previously Presented) The device of Claim 41, wherein the forwarding agent is further operable to forward the packet in response to the flow identifier not corresponding to the fixed filter.

43.   (Previously Presented) The device of Claim 42, wherein the forwarding agent is further operable to receive an action filter for the packet with the flow identifier not corresponding to the fixed filter.

44.   (Previously Presented) The device of Claim 43, wherein the forwarding agent is further operable to handle the packet according to the action filter.

45.   (Previously Presented) The device of Claim 41, wherein the flow identifier includes at least one of a source address, a destination address, a source port, a destination port, and a protocol.